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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents the arts curriculum in a way that demystifies the arts as an area requiring specialized knowledge by caregivers and early childhood teachers. It discusses the role that caregivers and teachers can play in fostering creativity and artistic expression among young children. It presents techniques that they can use to help children participate in drama, dance, art, and music activities. It also encourages caregivers and teachers to keep records of children's activities, including samples of student work. The booklet suggests that program newsletters and school displays can be used to communicate the nature of artistic activities to parents and the community. It also recommends that caregivers and teachers note children's responses to changes in materials and resources, and plan activities to reflect the developmental and multicultural needs of the children served. Two appendices contain suggestions for creative activities that use leaves and a short dramatic performance. (MDM)

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An Integrated Expressive Arts Program

DRAMA DANCE ART MUSIC

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WENDY SCHILLER
and
ANN VEALE

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An Integrated Expressive Arts Program

Wendy Schiller and Ann Veale

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The authors would like to thank Geof Hill and Diana Mannigel of the Institute of Early Childhood Studies, Sydney for their contribution to this booklet.

Geof Hill provided Appendix B — Concept to Performance on page 15 and Diana Mannigel the illustrations on page 4.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this booklet is to present the arts curriculum in a way which demystifies the arts as an area requiring specialised knowledge by caregivers and teachers. We begin with the idea that children make art, experiment with dance, play with sounds, and engage in dramatic play spontaneously. Adults set the scene; children are generally the initiators and adults respond.

Fostering artistic expression takes an understanding of child development and careful observation and planning in the same way as any other aspect of the program. These are skills that adults working with children already have. By utilising them fully in a way which integrates creative experiences with the total program, teachers can "optimise children's abilities to process information with three of their most powerful learning modalities — the auditory, the kinaesthetic, and the visual" (Boorman, 1987). In this way adults teach **creatively** as well as for **creativity** (Patterson, 1986).

In each of the following sections some specialised aspects of the adults' roles in a balanced, integrated arts program will be discussed. Each segment will discuss some versatile approaches which can be drawn upon to include all age groups of children, in large or small group situations, and adapting to the local conditions that are available.

INTEGRATING FACTORS — ADULTS' ROLES

Early expressive arts experiences for children are central dimensions of a quality play program which provides for a wide range of sensory experiences for children. Drama, dance, art and music do not necessarily depend on verbal or written experiences, but rather on development of kinaesthetic, visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory senses through experience. Children's curiosity about what they can see, hear, feel and do, motivates them to explore. Their ears guide their perception of sounds, eyes guide hands in the visual media, and early symbolic play develops into dramatic play as language and social opportunities expand.

Dance a Rainbow

Children respond to sensory stimulation in ways that are free of preconceived ideas. They do not necessarily respond to a strong visual experience with art in mind. They may **dance** a rainbow, or **paint** hurry-up lines. The boundaries that adults make between movement, drama and music may be artificial ones that have become hallowed by time and tradition. For children they are a part of a continuum of life, learning and play.

It is the adults who control the social and cultural environments and who govern children's access to many of these dimensions. It is adults who:

- respond to children's initiatives;
- see opportunities for sensory experience;
- mediate the perceptual stimuli to levels that an individual child prefers — i.e. hold a timid child in their arms so that they can view a new experience from a place of security;
- observe which sensory modality a baby responds best to;
- sing back the baby's early play sounds;
- swing a toddler up the steps as part of an ongoing game;
- tell stories about everyday events, special objects or personalised experiences.

Adult roles need to be recognised for their central place in:

- meeting the baby's individual, personal needs;
- providing friendly company, and/or an audience;
- engaging children in early sensory experiences using different media and methods;
- controlling the flow of new experiences, with familiar activities to provide for continuity and some refreshing changes to provide novelty and challenge;
- pacing the day so it can be divided into a stimulating sequence of vigorous and quiet activities without intrusive discontinuity to make a child conform to routines and schedules.

Several of the above highlight adults' guiding role in the provision of stability and change in children's programs. It is not necessary to choose novel experiences everyday, or every time a child attends a program. If, for example, children's art media changes every day, there is no opportunity for children to revisit familiar activities, or further develop their skills and explore the expressive potential of the material. The skill and the art of teaching lies in modulating the curriculum in response to children's needs and evaluating it (in some of the ways outlined in a later section of this booklet).

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LEARNING TO SEE THE WORLD THROUGH NEW EYES

Assessing and experiencing the world about them is basic for children's expression in body movement, sounds, words or drawing. A baby's earliest experiences are primarily kinaesthetic (being rocked to sleep). Other experiences are visual (watching leaves move on a tree) or auditory (hearing the results of an arm movement with a rattle in the hand). Later, as a result of experience and development, children understand that **they** can effect change as they see the results of their own footprint in sand, or imitate the cat's paw prints through the garden or trace a snail's silvery trail. Adults can also draw children's attention to the visual aspects of plants, leaves, animals, or to the sound of the train passing by, a clock chiming or bird singing. The view of a world from a supermarket trolley or a car seat is full of light and colour, smells and sounds. That is, an adult's role is to facilitate a child's making the connections between the visual and the kinaesthetic and broaden children's experiences as follows.

Children can have their attention drawn to different qualities of movement around them such as water flowing from the tap, washing blowing on a line, windmills revolving and branches moving in the wind. Heavy and light movements can be seen and can be experienced. At the same time children can be encouraged to examine in detail visual aspects such as the things about them — of leaves, shadows, reflections, the patterns of paving stones on the footpath or of stones in the creek bed. These experiences can be used directly to teach young children. Children observe how leaves unfold from the stem and how petals unfurl and twist as a flower opens. These actions can be reproduced by small groups of children opening and closing and twisting around each other using whole body actions in a sequence of movement.

As well as discovering shapes in things which can be seen, children can be introduced to things which lie beneath the surface, like coral, shells and animal bones. Looking through a magnifying glass opens up an entirely new aspect of seeing, and later a microscope or binoculars enables our eyes to absorb patterns not visible to the naked eye. Children may wish to document such experiences by painting, dancing or making music.

Building upon these early perceptual experiences can be a basis for planning further structured experiences as follows:

1) A *listening walk* with a focus on learning and identification of the different sounds that can be distinguished.

2) A *sculpture walk* where there are opportunities to feel, as well as see three dimensional art forms.

3) *Bird's eye view* walk to the top of the nearest hill, or climbing a tower can be a novel experience for children and enable them to gain a new perspective on their world.

4) *Making a collection* of natural materials for art can focus children's perception on natural materials such as seed pods, bark, feathers, dried flowers. Back in the centre children can use their found materials for constructive purposes by taking prints, or for making patterns in sand, collages, or arranging a 3D picture of natural materials.

5) A visit to a church can be a special musical opportunity to hear the organ played, the bell ring and to experiment with voices echoing and reverberating.

Making a collection of natural materials

PERFORMANCES — OR THE ARTIST AT WORK

Another way of expanding children's awareness of the range of the arts is to provide them with opportunities to experience live performances by other children or adults. These experiences may range from a visit to the symphony orchestra concert, attendance at a puppet show, a strolling street busker strumming a guitar, or watching a group of dancers in rehearsal. Where possible, children may be able to experience a wide variety of cultural experiences too, that may range from the Chinese New Year festivities, to listening to classical music; from participating in bush dancing and listening to a Country-and-Western band, to making and eating sushi.

In contrast to viewing a range of performances in the arts, children may also be able to visit the local Art Gallery, or attend an open-air exhibition to see a range of art and crafts made by other artists. Children may be able to contribute their own art for exhibition alongside adult displays, or they may be able to paint pictures using similar tools or media to those used by the adult artists. Silberstein-Storfer and Jones at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1982) and Piscitelli at the Queensland Art Gallery (1987) describe different programs of children's Art Gallery experiences and the impact on children's art-making in related studio tasks. Boorman (1987) also shows through her experiences in creative dance that if parents can be part of the shared teaching experience and part of the learning process, then the value is twofold. The child and the parent both benefit.

Adults and children discovering aesthetic experiences together is one of the unique possibilities

that the arts curriculum offers as some parents may also be encountering these experiences for the first time, and so have much to talk about in sharing their experiences with the children.

There is an important point to make when children are encouraged to present their products of art experience in performance. Too often the performance is aligned with the facilitator in an "aren't I good to be able to get children to do this" attitude which often results in endless rehearsals so that the product meets the performance standard of adults and loses the focus and meaning for children.

A visit to the Orchestra

Staging a performance

MAKING CONNECTIONS

One of the ways that children make connections is by experiencing continuity between their own dance, art, dramatic play or music and adult forms. Children can learn dances or join in dances that they can see others do. They can play simple instruments especially of the percussion type. Children can make up their own puppet plays, dress up and use 'props' for pretend plays. It is important for small children to realise that while no special performance element of dance, music or drama is expected, there is a continuity between what children can do, and what adults do. The feeling of being part of a larger group is also a valuable experience for a young child. Children will often join in spontaneously instead of just being part of the audience.

Sometimes teachers can make the connections by visual means. They can photograph a house being built, and display the pictures alongside those of a 'cubby built by children'. Decoration of children's play buildings by laying blocks in patterns can be contrasted with patterns and textures seen and felt in real buildings. Children can see a painting on a large scale and can paint a 'mural' on paper or fabric themselves. 'Making' paper from shredded newspapers is a surprisingly simple technique and is among the wide variety of 'making' experiences that lie within the reach of children. Simple print-making with cut vegetables or with 'found' objects is an art medium often provided for children, yet we may fail to explain to children the parallels with adult artists making

graphics. Such opportunities add a valuable dimension to children's efforts, because they can understand the process and appreciate the effect achieved.

Our purpose is to provide children with a rich array of aesthetic experiences which are likely to stimulate some expressive outcomes in drama, dance, art or music. Children need a foundation of sensitivity, perception and some skills for their bodies to fully function in expressive ways. The balance between stimulation, participation, appreciation as artist/critic of others' work needs some thought. Eisner (1979) said "expressive activities precede rather than follow expressive outcomes". His rationale was that 'one is seeking to have students engage in activities that are sufficiently rich to allow for a wide, productive range of educationally valuable outcomes' (1979:104). Children can respond unequivocally and without inhibitions, so it is the adult's responsibility to encourage aesthetic development. It may be the impact of the brilliant yellow of a daisy, the feel of a soft, downy duckling, the sight and sound of water rushing in the gutter, a kite with a waving tail or the taste of a strawberry that delights a child. But it is the beginning of a special feeling shared by adults and children, 'a sense of wonder' — a concern for shape, pattern, form, design, balance and sound that pleases us.

EVALUATION AS YOUR KEY TO PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Daily Journal

A daily record of events and your reflections about the children's changing interests and the development of your program is valuable. This method of record keeping allows you to chart the flow of children's interests. The reflective process has a personal professional development dimension for teachers for as Sergiovanni (1986:17) said "... reflective practice seeks to establish **augmented** professional intelligence ... (which) serves to inform the intuition as they (teachers) practice".

Objective Records

These can be kept to be enjoyed by children and parents and to recall the event. Some possibilities are to take photographs of projects carried out, and compile booklets with children's stories and illustrations. Audiotapes can provide a permanent record of sounds collected, or children's song-making, or music made to accompany a dance or a play. Videotapes can record special events like the musical, flamboyant Chinese Dragon procession, the dance of the popcorn or the day the children rolled down the sandhills. Often children will ask to replay these tapes and then paint or create a story as a result of the experience. Children enjoy watching themselves on video and may further develop ideas evoked by the video or extend an idea using different media.

Children's Records

Individual developmental records should include samples of children's art, or sketches of significant developmental milestones in individual progress. Jottings should also record the patterns of children's participation in dramatic play covering the nature of roles played, the complexity of the language used, the time span of their interest and numbers of other children involved. Interesting accounts of the varying day by day patterns of children's dramatic play are contained in 'Diary of a preschool teacher' (Thomas, 1985).

Newsletters

Weekly or monthly Parent Newsletters can also explain and interpret children's current play interests to the community. Sometimes these community links can be picked up and lead to further community participation. If, for example, children are interested in playing 'restaurants' or 'dentists'

in their dramatic play, some structured experiences of the real event can broaden children's experience. Photographs can lead to children relating a story to contribute to a class book about an excursion or event. These often reveal some interesting perceptions of events by children! The accuracy of some role playing may also be enlightening for adults and children.

Displays

These may take many forms and be for a range of purposes. The focus should be on creating an aesthetic environment but one which changes regularly. A display:

- has a broad focus showing that the teacher values a wide range of children's expression.
- emphasises the broad spectrum of media available for participation in the arts.
- ensures that some work is focussed at the **adult's eye level** to stimulate discussion and appreciation of children's work by parents.
- has finished works and materials arranged at **children's eye level** to foster discussion of the visual and perceptual features of the display by children. Children can learn to collaborate with each other, and to share perceptions of other children's work. Thus they begin to develop an empathy for other artist's expression and to appreciate other children's work.

All modes of art are suitable for display and can be enhanced by careful arrangement. Display designers should strive to achieve equity in seeking to provide opportunities for all children's work to be represented. As an aesthetic experience, a teacher should aim to enhance the viewer's perceptions for the visual qualities of the children's work. It may sometimes be necessary to rotate displays so that the accumulation of teaching pictures and of children's art work does not result in overcrowding and a surfeit of visual display material. Some rooms have so much competing visual material that the effect negates the purpose of enhancing the aesthetic qualities. The display effects may have the opposite outcome from that which was intended.

Check Lists

Whereas displays as a method of evaluation appear to give emphasis to the product dimension of the arts curriculum, other methods can be used to emphasise the value of participation, and in the process the method may reveal gaps in children's experience.

If a staff member wishes to evaluate the range of arts curriculum participation that children are selecting for themselves, they can do so by engaging in a simple check list for the day or week, e.g.:

Week ending April 1st.

Children	Art	Dance	Music	Language	Dramatic Play
Bill					
Amy					
Sue					

To document the quality of children's involvement as well, an adult could use a rating scale with numbers to quantify child n's participation as follows:

1 means a single trial attempt.
2 means a more extended but personal involvement.
3 means that social cooperation was apparent with at least one other child.
4 a cooperative project was planned and executed by .... children.

Sometimes teachers find that children in the group appear to restrict themselves in their choices and staff are uncertain whether to intervene in case:

1. a child has a personal need for playing in the home corner.

2. a child does not 'like' painting.
3. a child will only play outside and therefore does not choose to have to come inside for music.

Making professional judgements about such instances is a part of the daily decision-making processes made by teachers/caregivers. Deciding when and if adults should intervene requires knowledge about the child, sensitivity to the situation and events, and the art of choosing the right frame of reference that best matches the child's own style of approach. Smilansky (1989) claims that intervention is too seldom employed by adults, and dramatic play should be evaluated and stimulated in the same way as puzzles and cognitive skills.

Dramatic play should be evaluated

PROFESSIONAL TEACHING RECORDS: THE PROGRAM BOOK

Program evaluations should include notes about children's responses to changes in materials and resources. A glance through the weekly evaluations should enable staff to check their planning effectiveness in the following kinds of questions:

- How long is it since the following materials were changed?
  - — the drawing materials?
  - — the dress-up box?
  - — the waste material supplies?
  - — the home corner to reflect a variety of cultures?
- Are boys and girls participating equally in the arts program and will proximity of doll and block areas facilitate integrated play? Do you have a preference for certain activities which you repeat despite children's indifference?
- Does the expressive arts program function equally well indoors and outdoors?
- Are the children's home cultures represented and extended in the program
  - — in song?

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— in properties for dramatic play?
— in movement activities?
— in the variety of available materials?
— in ideas presented through stories and poems?

- Are children having daily/weekly access to movement, art and music other than
  — outdoor play?
  — singing/action songs, finger plays?
  — using simple musical instruments?
  — doing an easel painting?
- Does the program reflect local community influences and have community people been included as resource people in the expressive arts program?

THE PROGRAM PLANNING PROCESS: EVALUATIONS

Early childhood settings vary widely in the number of adults that form the staff team for planning purposes. In some settings it is very difficult for staff to have time together, however, the processes that are needed are similar. Some questions you can pose for yourselves are:

- Do we include open ended discussions with children and encourage the 'playing with ideas' to extend and stimulate children's thinking and imagination?
- Have we learned anything new from the children lately? Have we listened to what children are saying and watched to see how they are interpreting experiences?
- Have we checked children's knowledge and cultural background when planning their learning experiences, so that multiculturalism is consciously part of the curriculum?
- Is our program responsive to children's different age levels, background interests, and modes of care provision?
- Are children doing as much for themselves as they are capable of?
- Are we utilising the possibilities of different **times of day** for our arts program?
- Do we only provide music as a large group activity, or do we provide a cassette recorder and soft cushions for children to listen quietly to music at the beginning or the end of a long day?
- Are we using our building to its full potential? Do we encourage children to use sunny and shady spots on the verandah for browsing through books or for listening to stories on someone's lap?

SPRINGBOARDS FOR BEGINNERS

Reading and thinking about drama, dance, art and music is a valuable aid to stimulating your own sensitivity to the individual curriculum areas. You will find copious resources to prime your thinking about the separate themes of drama, dance, art and music. This book was written to assist teachers and caregivers to blend the expressive arts into a major curriculum component, which requires extensive thought, planning and imagination by the adults as well as children, to create a 'sense of wonder' and to revive the discovery process for adults and children alike.

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APPENDIX A

Developing an Idea

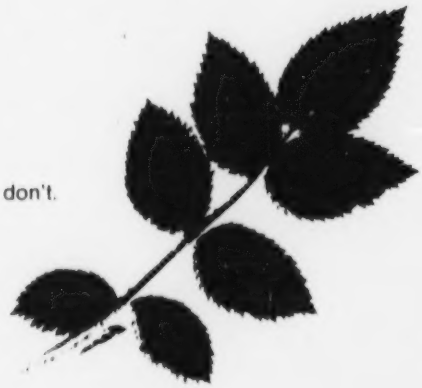
A child brings a bunch of leaves. Here is a possible scenario for curriculum development.

1. (a) Children bring in autumn leaves. Observe
   - — shape
   - — colour
   - — design
   - — texture
   - — how attached to branch
   - — smell
   - — size

   (b) Teacher: Go for 'a leaf walk' — to collect leaves with regard to the above categories.

2. Add contrasting leaves — e.g. verbena, ferns, cactus, eucalyptus, maple.

3. Classify into (sets)
   - — colour
   - — shape
   - — ways of opening/closing
   - — ways of attachment at branch
   - — texture (rough/smooth)
   - — bushes which lose leaves and those which don't.



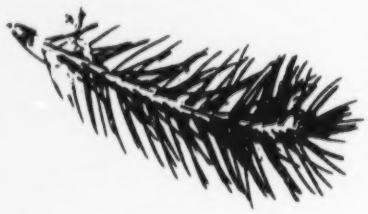
Art

- curved leaf connecting with an angular leaf
- leaf rubbings/spattering
- roller painter/rubbings/leaf prints
- leaf ribs
- looking at leaf through magnifying glass and reproducing **pattern**
- collect things made from leaves e.g. baskets, earrings, resin paperweights, food (parsley, cabbage), material (linen, tapa cloth)
- cooking in leaves (e.g. earth oven and banana leaves)
- paper made from wood/bark paintings
- collage arrangements
- free painting (teacher selects colours and shades to reflect leaves) china/stained glass windows
- leaves in waxed paper to preserve colour (leaf pressing).

Music from leaves

Possible activities for inclusion:

- blowing grass, gum leaves
- 'reed' instruments
- tempo (leaves swirling, flying, settling, drifting, whipping)
- mood (gentle whispering of leaves, rhythmic swishing of wind through the casuarinas, scraping and raking of dry leaves on pavements and against windows, crackle of burning leaves on a bonfire). For example, Sibelius' *Finlandia*, Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*.
- seed pods
  - — exploding
  - — shapes
  - — rattles



Dance

- opening/closing
  - — unfolding and spreading of a fern frond
  - — changing of angle of stem in midday sun
  - — unfurling and twisting of a bud
- relationship of leaf shapes in clusters as they move (e.g. do leaves have five fingers or spikey, individual, curved, angular, soft, 3D, sending out tendrils).
- language and movement sequences
  - — flick, twist, drift and die
  - — swish, tumble, clump together
  - — drift, undulate and settle gently
- 'Banksia Babies Ball' (from Snugglepot and Cuddlepie books) — determine kind of movement which is appropriate for Banksia.

Dramatic Play

- Leaves for
  - — carrying
  - — costumes
  - — utensils
  - — shade fences, shelter, houses, roofs
  - — weaving (grass huts, thatched roof houses, Aboriginal wiltja)
  - — mats and beds
  - — processions
  - — books
  - — food

  (e.g. used in different cultures)
- fantasy play (e.g. Peg's Fairy Book) and use of leaves for wedding dresses, hats, elves' clothing, spiders' houses, gnomes' machinery
- storytelling — children's own words and illustrations
- poems about leaves — children compose these.

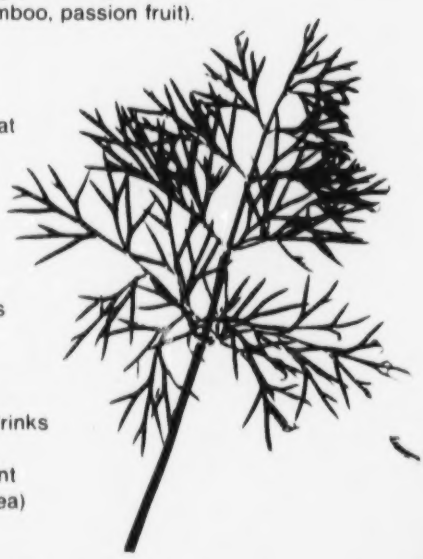
Maths

- counting, sorting, classifying, shape
- grouping according to species
- patterns
- shadows
- decoration on sand patterns, castles
- construction
- fabric, wallpaper, repeat designs
- problem solving (i.e. 3 fingered leaves e.g. clover, bamboo, passion fruit).

Language

Other meanings of leaf

- page in a book (leaf)
- look through a book (leaf through)
- front page (flyleaf)
- hinged flap of a table
- 'turn over a new leaf'
- leaf insect



Nutrition

Leaves you can eat

- lettuce
- cabbage
- spinach
- silverbeet
- celery
- broccoli
- brussel sprouts
- parsley
- chives
- nasturtium

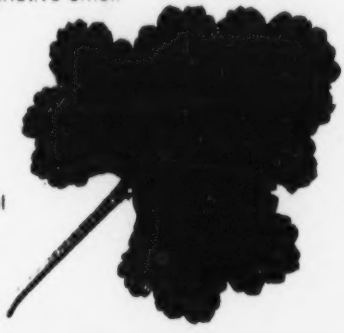
Leaves to make drinks

- tea leaves
- mint/peppermint
- lemon grass (tea)

Sensory Perception

Leaves with distinctive smell

- chives
- geranium
- rosemary
- bay leaves
- verbena
- pine needles
- lavender
- dill and fennel
- eucalyptus



You can think of many more!

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APPENDIX B

Concept to Performance

Title: *The Seagull Sat on a Rock*

by Geof Hill

I hold up a boomerang.

Me: "What does this boomerang look like?"
They: "A snake."
They: "A boomerang."
They: "A seagull."

They have nominated the topic of the performance.

Me: "Tell me about the seagull."
They: "It sat on a rock."
Me: "So our story is — Once upon a time a seagull sat on a rock."
Me: "What happened then?"
They: "It got shot."
Me: "Once upon a time a seagull sat on a rock and got shot."

They have turned subject into plot — Beginning, Middle, End.

Me: "Let's try to tell our story with sound and create a symphony."
"Think about the sounds your body can make.
Think about the sounds your body can make with the environment.
Tell me some sounds we could use for the beginning."
They: "Seagull sounds
The waves."

They have embellished the story with scene setting —
There is an ocean. A seagull sat on the rock. It got shot.

Me: "Let's use these sounds to add to our story.
When we want to suggest the opening let's create wave sounds."
Me: "To tell the bit about the landing on the rock, make seagull sounds."
I conduct them in a sound symphony. Raising my hands and lowering them to suggest Volume of the Orchestra.
Me: "What can we do to suggest the seagull is shot?"
They: "Clap loudly — one clap."

Our story now has an accompanying "soundtrack".

Me: "Let's look at some ways to add movement to this story."
"What are some ways we can move so people will know we are pretending to be waves?"

They suggest a range of wave-like movements.

Me: "What are some ways we can move to suggest we are seagulls landing on a rock?"

They suggest variations of flapping (arm) wings.

Me: "What are some ways we can pretend we are seagulls being shot?"

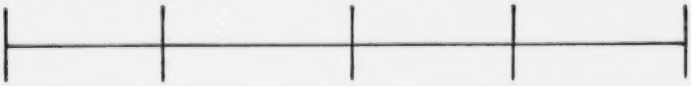
They suggest variations (a sudden drop to an extended dramatic fall).

The group has now explored the possibilities. Depending on their age and ability to work in a group by themselves I would suggest they do this. Alternately each individual can move in their own way to the accompanying sound track.

We have reached "a performance" of the movement. A ballet — *The seagull sat on the rock and got shot.*

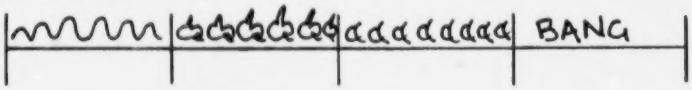
For rehearsal purposes we can document both the sound track and the choreography.

I present bar line

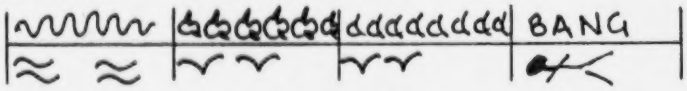


Me: "What is a symbol I could use to suggest in the music that we are making wave sounds?"

With similar question I score the music



and document the choreography the same way.



With the music and choreography documented I can return to it for:

Rehearsal tonal performance
Embellishment of the story
Writing songs to accompany the sound track.

Writing a Song

Me: "Does anyone know a song about a seagull that sat on a rock and got shot?"
They: Dead Silence!
Me: "Well we'll have to write one.
What is a song you all know?"
They: "the bear went over the mountain"
We sing it so that we know the tune.
Me: "Instead of the bear going over the mountain
What should our first line be?"
They: "The seagull sat on a rock."
Me: "Rock — has only one beat.
Mountain has two. How will we sing that bit?"
They: "Ro-ck . . . Big Rock . . . Sea Rock."
I write:
The seagull sat on a big rock
The seagull sat on a big rock
The seagull sat on a big rock.
Da Dum Da Dum Da Dum.
Me: "What can we put for the Da Dum bit?"
They: "Then he got shot."
Me: "How does that fit the beat (rhythm)?"
They: "We need some more things to say."
"What about. And then the gull got shot. Bang!"

We have written a song.